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BIANCA, GIULO, AND JACQUES, IN THE BOUDOIR.

THE DEAD BRIDAL.

A VENETIAN TALE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

BY JONATHAN FREKE SLINGSBY.

CHAPTER VIII.

Herm. "——— Pray you sit by us,

And tell 's a tale.

Mam. Merry or sad shall't be?

Her. As merry as you will.

Mam. A sad tale's best for winter;

I have one of spirits and goblins.

Her. Let's have that, sir;

Come on, sit down, come on and do your best

To fright me with your spirits."—*Winter's Tale.*

THE day was far spent when the two youths, Giulio Polani and the Sieur de la Mole, found themselves once again in the streets of Venice. The spot at which the former arrested the steps of his companion was one which might well command the attention of a stranger. It was close to the north-western angle of the grand-ducal palace, and the spectator could obtain a full view either due westward along the great piazza, terminated by the church of St. Gimignano, or, turning his head southward, survey the piazzetta through its whole line, till the eye rested on the waters of the Giudecca. The lower story of the palace was supported upon arches that sprang from massive pillars, and thus formed a magnificent arcade down the whole western front. This was the favourite promenade of the Venetian nobility, both in the morning between six and eleven o'clock, and in the evening between five and eight. The "Broglio," as it was called, was in fact the exchange of Venice for the nobility, quite as much as the Rialto was the exchange for the merchants; and in good truth as much business was done in the one locality as in the other; and though the actors were of a different class, the transactions themselves were often very similar in their character. If at the Rialto the merchant sold his merchandize to the best purchaser, so too at the Broglio, the noble often sold his influence, his vote, it might be his honour, to the highest bidder, the only difference in the two transactions being the openness with which the one, and the secrecy with which the other, made his bargain. If the usurious money-lender overreached or oppressed in the one place, the greedy aristocrat circumvented and ensnared in the other. In the one there were frauds, and chicane, and the tricks of trade; in the other, corruption, and intrigues, and the specious deceits of polished life. Each had their class-vice, and venalities, whether practised beneath the gown of the patrician or the cloak of the merchant.

But no such sentiments as these were suggested to the mind of the foreigner as he viewed the scene before him. Notwithstanding that the vast majority of the nobility was now absent from the city, serving in the army and on board the fleet at Palestrina, there were still left a sufficient number, especially of those to whom the regulation of the state was committed, and whose presence in the city was indispensable, to give brilliancy and effect to the concourse. Beneath the arcade might now be seen groups of nobles, some in couples, others, but less frequently, in larger numbers, promenading to and fro. It was noticeable, too, that the mechanics and artisans, and indeed all classes of the citizens who were not noble, did not venture to intrude themselves beneath the sanctity of the arcade; while a closer observer would have discovered that, even among those, who assumed the right to walk within the pillars, a certain etiquette was observed, which separated even the nobles into classes; and distinct portions of the promenade seemed to have been conventionally appropriated for each class, upon which the others carefully abstained from intruding.

Outside the line of the arcade, the piazzetta was crowded with persons of every grade of the citizens below the rank of noble, and in addition were to be seen the denizens of most of the nations of the world, whom the commerce of Venice

brought constantly to the city. Persians and Turks, Dalmatians and Greeks, Jews from every region, and Christians from all parts of Christendom. These, as they passed to and fro, or stood in groups, added infinitely to the picturesque effect of the scene, by the variety and contrasts of their costumes, and the brilliant colours of their attire, compared with the sobriety and sameness of the garb of the Venetian citizen.

It was not without some excusable pride that Giulio noticed the manifest admiration of his friend, as he looked around him and contemplated one of the most imposing spectacles of the kind that even a travelled man could then behold, for assuredly in no country could one see more architectural magnificence grouped together—a nobler square, a purer sky, or a richer assemblage than the piazza and piazzetta di San Marco exhibited on a fine evening in the end of spring, or during the early summer. At length the young stranger turned to his friend and said:—

"In good faith, my Giulio, thou hast done well to bring me hither at such an hour as this. He who should miss this sight would carry away with him but an imperfect idea of your fair Venice."

Giulio made no reply, but his smile showed that he appreciated and enjoyed his friend's remark: the latter resumed:—

"Come now, thou shalt explain to me the significance of the various robes which I perceive the nobles wear. In truth, I thought your citizens affected but little distinction in dress, deeming all denizens of the republic on an equality—is it not so?"

Giulio smiled once again, but with an import different from before—it was the smile of one who cared not to answer a question when he scarce knew whether it was prompted by naivety or a pleasant malice.

"The mere citizens all wear the cloak of Paduan cloth, as you may perceive," he at length replied. "But the clarissimi who bear any office in the state wear their gowns of office."

"Ah! I comprehend. Well then, who may that distinguished person be who wears the long gown of red damask, with the full sleeves, and the flap falling over his left shoulder?"

"What, he with the red hose and shoes? oh, that is the chief of the Council of Ten. The other with whom he walks in such earnest conversation is one of the secretaries of the council,—he with the gown of blue cloth with blue flaps edged with taffeta."

"Truly a mysterious-looking pair they seem," said the foreigner, laughing gaily; then checking himself, as he observed the serious visage of his friend, he continued: "Pardie, I forgot, dear Giulio, that I am in Venice, and not in La Belle France. Well, there is a fine, martial-looking fellow in the gown of black damask, within which, as it opens, you can see his crimson doublet and hose. He is not one of your city savi, surely?"

"No," replied Giulio; "that is a knight of the Terra Firma."

"Ma foi! Say you so, indeed? In good sooth I should not care to get upon my war-horse in such a cumbrous garment,

if I were the good knight. It would be sorely in the way of a demipique saddle, and one would scarce be able to put lance in rest or flourish a brand with these long sleeves trailing about."

"But thou shouldst see our knights of the Terra Firma upon the terra firma, Jacques," retorted Giulio, with some show of irritation; "thou wouldst then know how they can lay aside the long gown for the hauberk, and the felt hat for the camail de fer."

"Ah, I cry you mercy," said the Frenchman, interrupting him, with an apologetic bow. "I forgot that you have no horses in the city of the lagune."

In observations such as these the young men continued to indulge for a space as they walked down the piazzetta towards the water's edge.

"And now, Giulio," said his friend, "thou hast shown me much to-day, but there is one sight which I would fain see beyond them all."

"Name it, dear Jacques."

"And thou wilt promise to gratify my wish?"

"Assuredly, if it be within my power."

"Well, that is reasonable. Dost remember, Giulio, one lovely moonlight night, when thou and I lingered in our pinance by a fair villa upon the banks of the Seine?"

"Ah, yes, Jacques: but what of it now, I prithee?"

"Why this, Giulio. Thou didst then speak of thy own home and thy own kin, and, in chief, of one whom thou didst call sister, though sister she was not at all; and I thought then, that if ever I should come to Venice, I would ask thee to show me a woman such as thou didst then describe. And I told thee, Giulio—did I not?—how that brothers were but partial judges. And thou didst maintain that our Gallic maidens were not fair as she of thine own Venice. Then, Giulio, we made a sportive wager of—I forget how many crowns, each maintaining the beauty of his own land; and thou said'st that if I should come to Venice, I should be convinced by my own eyes, and should give judgment against myself with mine own lips. Was it not so, Giulio?"

"In truth, dear Jacques, it was even as thou sayest. But the matter passed altogether from my mind, even until thou hast now recalled it."

"Well, art thou prepared to yield the palm to our French demoiselles, or art thou still as confident in Venetian beauty?"

"Nay, it is thou, Jacques, that shalt yield. What sayest thou? Shall we leave the noise of the city and seek the placid lagunes, as the sun is sinking? Most gladly will Bianca receive as her friend one who is the friend of her brother."

"Be it so, then," said Jacques; "and now let us lose no more time."

There was then, as there is now, and we make no doubt will ever be, while one stone of Venice remains upon another, a traghetto, or boat-stand, at the foot of the steps of the piazzetta. Several gondolas were lying at the water's edge, the gondoliers stretched lazily along the benches waiting for some chance fare.

"Antonio!" cried Giulio, hailing one of the boatmen.

"Eccomi, eccomi, signor. Son pronto io," responded a young man, springing upright, and with a sweep of his oar-blade sending his little craft right up to the foot of the stairs.

The young men entered. Giulio pointed with his hand beyond the Giudecca in a north-easterly direction.

"Ah, si, si, eccellenza: capisco ben," said the young gondolier, with a sly smile, and a stroke of his oar that drove them swiftly along the water.

"Well then, Antonio, if thou dost know whither thou art to go, I shall have the less to tell thee. And how is thy mother?"

"The Virgin be praised, eccellenza, the old woman bears up bravely, especially when she can get half an hour's gossip with a friend, as she did yesterday, when good mistress Giudetta called to see her."

By this time the gondola had cleft its way into the middle of the Canale di Giudecca, and was nearly opposite the Island

of San Giorgio Maggiore. The noble church which now stands upon the island had not yet been reared, but the convent and ancient chapel of the Benedictine monks were to be seen casting their shadows eastward upon the water.

"How calmly the water laves the shore of yonder isle," remarked Jacques, "what a picture of that dreamy repose which one can fancy is never broken by a ruffle."

"And yet," replied his friend, "at times the wind sweeps across its surface, and the waves roll in from the Adriatic, so that few gondolas would venture to cross the water."

"Ah! true, eccellenza," said Antonio, "unless the blessed San Giorgio himself should take it under his protection, as he did when the city was saved."

"And how was that, pray?" asked Jacques.

"What! has the signore never heard of the miracle of the three holy saints?"

"Never," said Jacques.

"Oh, che crederia?" exclaimed the boatman in surprise; but pardon,—the signore is perhaps a stranger?"

"It is even so; but thou shalt tell me the tale."

"Nay, signore, it is no tale, it is as true as the blessed Gospel. I heard my father tell it a thousand times—and he heard it from old Domenico himself, for they were great friends."

"Well, then, Antonio, thou canst tell it to the signore all the better, I suppose," said Giulio.

"Ay, eccellenza, I have it as pat off as if it were written out for me in a book and I could read it."

"Commence then, good youth, for I am anxious to hear it."

"Volontieri, signore?"—and so Antonio proceeded with

THE LEGEND OF THE THREE SAINTS.

"Well, then, good gentlemen, it is about forty years ago, as well as I can count, that what I am going to tell your excellencies took place. The season was a terribly wet one: the rain fell, fell day and night, just as if the clouds had no bottom to them; and then the Brenta, and all the other rivers that flow into the lagunes, were swollen to the top of their banks, and poured down in oceans. For thirty days the flood continued to increase, and the waters to rise all round the city and the islands, till people began to think that God was going to destroy the world once again with a deluge. Well, signori, on the thirtieth day, as it was coming on towards midnight, a tremendous tempest of wind sprang up all of a sudden, so awful, they say who heard it, that it seemed as if all the devils in hell had broken their chains and come howling and sweeping through the air. Just at this very time, a poor old fisherman, that went by the name of Domenico, was drawing up his little boat as well as he could to the bank of the Terra Nuova—"

"Nay, there thou art going astray, assuredly, Antonio," said Giulio, interrupting the chronicler. "It was at the Riva of the Canale di San Marco that old Domenico chanced to be when the tempest caught him,—so they who knew best affirm."

"Under favour, signore," replied the gondolier, "he who knew best where old Domenico made fast his boat that night, was, I should suppose, old Domenico himself, and he told my father 'twas at the Terra Nuova—and my father told me 'twas at the Terra Nuova, and I tell your excellencies 'twas at the Terra Nuova, and—"

"Proceed, in the name of the Virgin, then, after your own fashion," cried the youth, cutting short the discussion.

"Sicuro, signore: one should not commit any mistake in so important a matter. Well, then, the poor fellow was in a sad plight, drenched to the skin, and hungry, and weary; for he had been toiling all the day, trying to catch a few fish, but the fish were all frightened and would not take any bait. So when he had moored the boat in the best shelter he could find, he was just stepping upon the bank when he perceived a man standing in front of him.

"You are in luck," said the stranger; 'just in the nick of time.'

"As to luck," replied Domenico, "I never was in luck in my life; but I am just in time, I believe, to save myself from spending the night in the bottom of the canal."

"Thou art in luck," repeated the other; "thou shalt earn a good fare, and ferry me across to San Giorgio."

"Diavolo!" cried Domenico, "come si può andare a San Giorgio? How the devil, signore, could one get across to San Giorgio such a wild night as this? Noi ci annegheremo. By the blessed San Marco, we should be drowned to a certainty."

"By the blessed San Marco," said the other solemnly, "not a hair of your head shall be wet. Come."

The stranger spoke with an air of authority that Domenico found himself unable to resist, and stepping in he sat down at the stern, while the fisherman pulled away with all his might for the island. The will of God so appointing it, he reached the shore in perfect safety. Then the stranger, who during the time had neither spoken nor moved, arose, and ere Domenico could demand his fare, he was on the bank.

"Aspettate qui un poco," said he to the old man, with a wave of his hand, "wait for me here for a moment;" and so he vanished in the darkness.

Domenico was very angry, for he thought that the stranger had played him a slippery trick, cheating him of his fare as well as putting his life in jeopardy. However, when he looked back across the dark and troubled waters, he thought the best thing he could do was to stay where he was for the night. He had scarcely made up his mind to this, when he saw the stranger returning with another person, seemingly a young man of a warlike appearance. The two stepped into the boat, and the former, turning to Domenico, said in the same authoritative voice—

"Va verso San Nicolo di Lido."

"To San Nicolo di Lido!" repeated the old man in astonishment. "Chi mai potrebbe andare a un remo? In the name of the Holy Virgin, who would be able to row to San Nicolo di Lido?"

"But the other said in a very quiet calm voice, 'Va Sicuramente che tu potrai andare. Be well assured that thou canst accomplish the task. And then, he added, seeing Domenico still hesitating, 'e sarai ben pagato.'

"Well, off he pulled lustily, commending himself to God and the Virgin, and though the water was rough, and the night as wild as ever, they reached San Nicolo in safety. The two men now left the boat and quickly returned with a third, a venerable-looking person, who seemed, as Domenico told my father, like an ecclesiastic. They were no sooner seated than the same who had heretofore spoken, directed Domenico to pull away out as far as the two castles. This seemed the strangest order of all, nevertheless he felt somehow as if he had no power to refuse: so he took to his oars once more, and made the direction of the castles. All the way the storm was at the highest, and as they were just getting out into the open sea, they beheld coming towards them from the two castles at a marvellous speed, as if flying along the waters, a galley full of devils; such, at all events, Domenico took them to be, from their terrible looks and their awful curses and denunciations; and as they came close up to the little boat, he could hear them vowing that they would inundate all Venice, and plunge her for ever in the abyss. Suddenly the sea, which up to this time was tossing in the most turbulent manner, as the old man used to declare, became as calm and tranquil as it is this moment. Then the three men stood up, and making each the sign of the cross, they addressed the demons, and they conjured them in the name of Christ to depart and go their ways. No sooner had they done this, than in an instant the galley disappeared and was never again seen or heard of. Then the three men caused Domenico to row them back again to the Lido, where the ecclesiastic got out, and thereupon his first acquaintance said to the boatman, 'Now for San Giorgio Maggiore.' Away pulled Domenico, for by this time he felt that he was in company with those whom it would not be very safe to gainsay: besides, he had

lost all sense of danger, so away he pulled till he ran the boat up beside the very self-same spot on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore, where he had taken in the soldier. No sooner was the boat at rest than out stepped the second of his mysterious fares, and disappeared as strangely as he had come. There was now only the original person left in the boat. Domenico looked at him for further directions, whereupon he merely said, 'A Terra Nuova.' To the Terra Nuova accordingly the old man shaped his course, and at last arrived at the very post where he was about to moor his boat when he met with this singular adventure. The stranger was just stepping ashore as the others did, when old Domenico bethought him that it was now high time to remind him of his promise. With somewhat of a fearful heart, for, as he said, he knew well he was dealing with no ordinary person, he ventured to say,—

"Eccellentissimo. I have seen a great miracle, no doubt. Nevertheless, miracles will not fill a poor fisherman's belly now-a-days. Your worship will, I humbly hope, pay me as you have promised for my hard night's work."

"What thou sayest is just enough," replied the other. "Tu hai ragione. Go then in the morning to the Doge, and to the Procuratori di San Marco; tell them what thou hast seen and heard, and desire them to pay you."

"Ah, Dio, noble sir," said the old man, "were I to tell them all these marvellous things, they would not believe a word of them, and they would, I fear, pay me with the lash or the prison."

"They *shall* believe thee," said the other. "Tell them thou hadst San Marco in thy boat, and the cavaliero San Giorgio, as likewise the holy bishop, San Nicolo, and that Venice would have been drowned, but for us three and thyself, who served us so bravely!"

"The old man knew not what to say when he found himself in the presence of the great patron saint of our city. At length he shook his head and said,—'Evangelista Santissimo, eglino non me crederanno. Alas! they will not credit such a one as I.'"

"They shall," said the saint, "I tell thee, they shall. Here, take this ring and show it to them in the morning, and say I gave it to thee."

"Thereupon he departed, leaving the old man full of perplexity, not well knowing whether the whole was not a dream—except that he really had a rich gold ring in his hand, studded with precious stones. So when the morrow came, the old fisherman presented himself before the Doge, and told his tale, ending it by showing the ring. Nothing could exceed the astonishment of his highness at this, for he knew the ring in an instant. However, he sent off to the sanctuary of San Marco, to find if the ring was in its place, and lo, it was missing from its place. Just at this moment intelligence was brought that the water was falling rapidly in the lagunes, which gave such confirmation to the fisherman's narrative, that no one was impious enough any longer to doubt a word of it. His highness gave the ring, forthwith, to Ser Marco Loredano and Ser Andrea Dandolo, who were then the Procuratori of Saint Marks, and they lodged it in its place in the sanctuary, where it is, they say, up to this day!"

"Well, and what became of Domenico? was he paid his fare in the long run?" asked Jacques.

"Ah! Per Bacco, his fortune was made. The signory did not neglect the saint's directions, but they settled a state pension on the old man, which made him comfortable for the rest of his life. So that, eccellenza, is the true account of how the three saints saved the city of Venice."

Ere Antonio had concluded the legend of the three saints, the gondola had passed from the lagunes and entered the Adriatic. A short time sufficed to bring the party to the point of the shore, near which stood the villa with which the reader is already acquainted—that in which Bianca Morosini now resided. In that same sweet boudoir, with its balcony looking out upon the sea, was the maiden seated when the young men entered the house. What was the subject of her thoughts just then, one would scarce have needed to ask who

could have seen the *abandon* of that graceful form half reclining on the couch, and marked the long black lash of the closed lid as it reposed on the upper part of the cheek, whose paleness was not invaded by the faint blush that tinged the face a little lower. He would have at once pronounced the subject was one in which the fancy was busily at work, and which engrossed the heart much more than the intellect—and that smile upon the scarce parted lips betrayed that the pictures of the fancy and the speculations of the heart were both pleasurable. At the farther end of the apartment a young maiden, apparently about her own age, was employed arranging some flowers in a vase. She was attired in a variety of bright colours, and in a costume somewhat fantastic, and as she moved about, the toss of her head and the coquettish expression of her eyes announced the lady's maid—such as she was in Venice—one who, by her own freedom of manners, amply made up for the reserve in those of her mistress, one who, in the church, or at the public gardens, or passing through the public streets behind her mistress, was ever on the alert to watch every favourable opportunity to facilitate the little love adventures of herself or her mistress, to tell young gallants *by accident* where they were to be found in the evening, what mask her lady appeared in at the ball, and learn in return the colour of the gentleman's *domino*, and to make assignations at the *ridotto*, or at the chapel, or in the saloon of some common friend, who might be favourably disposed towards the young people. In no part of the world, not excepting Spain, had the ladies' maid more arduous functions to discharge than in the fair city of Venice. Nor will this be wondered at when it is remembered that nowhere were the daughters of noble houses watched with more strictness than in Venice. The greatest possible horror of *mesalliances* was entertained by those proud aristocrats, and parents who could not obtain suitable matches for their daughters preferred to consign them to convents rather than to the protection of husbands beneath their own rank. To guard against any mischance of this nature was, therefore, a principal object with those who had the care of the young Venetian ladies, and so they contrived to keep them as much as possible from that free intercourse with the other sex which was more or less liberally accorded in other countries. To counterplot parents and guardians in this respect was, after all, a natural, though certainly not a very commendable, consequence of the over strictness which was exercised, and hence a thousand ingenious devices and contrivances were resorted to by clever lacqueys and smart ladies' maids, to forward the love affairs of those whom they served. One had only to look at the sparkling black eyes of Giovanna, and the quick and restless glances with which they roved about from object to object, to be convinced that she was fully endowed with those qualities of intrigue, sagacity, and readiness that were necessary for a lady's maid; and yet never were such inestimable qualities more totally useless, at least so far as the mistress was concerned, than in the present instance. Dear, simple-hearted Bianca! She had no lovers, no gallants—no heart affairs—save one, and that one was too sacred for the intermeddling of a waiting-maid; and so Giovanna was forced to content herself with rendering the ordinary and more legitimate services of her station, and of cultivating her talent for intrigue in the affairs of her own heart only.

The entrance of Giulio and his friend caused, of course, some little excitement in the boudoir. The faint flush deepened and mounted on the cheek of Bianca, as, after welcoming Giulio, she received the courtesies of the stranger. The serving-maiden did not fail to admire the fine figure and fashionable attire of the foreigner, and to fall into instant speculation as to who he was, what he was, and why he was here. She contrived to throw the flowers out of the vase, that she might have the excuse of waiting in the apartment to re-arrange them; but this was at length accomplished, and she retired, leaving the three to enjoy their own society without the surveillance of others.

And why should not we follow her example? Why should not we permit one episode in the social existence of three

young people to pass without recording every word, anatomising every sentiment, moralising upon every action? Already have we given our readers an insight into the heart of one of the three—that clear, pure heart that one might look through as he would look through the translucent water, or the clear crystal. The heart of man is less easily read, for there are many things to tincture its purity, to make opaque that which should be transparent—complex feelings, conflicting master-passions, contending interests. What, then, were the sentiments which the two others of the party entertained for the beautiful girl in whose presence they sat, it would be premature to say. One of them, Giulio, felt at least all the love of a brother, all the pride of a brother; but did he feel anything more? Was his love stronger, tenderer, more exacting than the love of a brother? Did he feel even a momentary pang of jealousy as he witnessed the admiration of his friend, which the latter did not even seek to conceal? Did the gallantries of anyone but himself to the girl seem misplaced; and did he long for the hour when he should enjoy her converse without the presence of a third; and, above all, of a third of his own sex, and of attractions such as he could not help admitting Jacques was possessed of? All these questions we shall not now answer; nor shall we speculate on the precise nature of the feelings which Jacques entertained towards the lady. Certain it is, however, that upon the return of the two youths that evening to Venice, their conversation was by no means as unconstrained and as animated as it was wont to be of old. Giulio was abstracted, moody, and for minutes together totally silent. Jacques appeared less gay and careless in his manner; and, at times, Giulio surprised him gazing upon his face with an expression of melancholy, yet kind interest, as if he had penetrated the young Venetian's secret love, even before the latter had fully acknowledged it to himself. It seemed as if the memory of the ciarlatano's prediction of the morning came upon the young men like a dark shadow, from whose gloom they could not altogether emerge.

It was not till many hours of the early night had passed over their heads, as they sat in the Palazzo Polani, recounting over the wine-flask some of their pleasant days, that their wonted cheeriness of tone and manner returned to either. At length they parted with a cordial embrace at midnight, each returning to his apartment, having planned the pleasures of the succeeding day.

In the morning, when Giulio had dressed, he sought his friend's apartment, but it was empty. As he was returning to the salone, wondering at the early movements of his guest, Tomaso handed him a letter: breaking the silken thread that tied it, Giulio read the following words,—

"It is necessary that I leave Venice without delay. Till we meet again, accept my thanks and confide in my love. I have lost the wager, dear Giulio, and thou hast won. Be it so. I shall pay thee, assuredly—perhaps when thou least expectest it.

"Adieu.

"JACQUES."

Giulio was both surprised and grieved at this sudden departure of his friend. To all his inquiries he could get no other answer than this, that early in the morning his guest had gone out, but returned shortly after, apparently in haste with a packet in his hand, which looked as if just received. He announced to Tomaso that he had suddenly received information which required his immediate departure, and ordered his cloak-bag to be put in the gondola which awaited him at the water-gate of the palazzo. He then wrote the few lines which he left for Giulio, with directions to give them to him when he left his chamber, but by no means to disturb him in the meantime. And so he departed.

After turning the matter again and again in his mind, the young Venetian came to the conclusion that his guest had gone to the osteria, and there found a letter for him, which required his presence speedily elsewhere. What the nature of this summons might be he had no means of forming any

idea, but the fact of Jacques having been seen with a letter in his hand upon his return to the palazzo seemed to justify the conclusion to which he had come. At length he dismissed the subject, with the belief that a little time would clear up the matter, as he had no doubt that Jacques would soon write

to explain it; and so, when he had taken his morning's repast, his thoughts turned, not unnaturally, to the scene of the previous evening, and then he thought of Bianca, and then—he stepped into the family gondola, and desired Beppo to row to the Villa Morosini.

LESLIE'S "SANCHO PANZA."

THERE never was an author worthier of an artist's attention than Cervantes, in his inimitable "Don Quixote." It is one

sonification of primitive instincts, of popular good sense, of matter-of-fact practicality,—that charming contrast with the



SANCHO PANZA AT DINNER WHILE GOVERNOR OF BARATARIA. FROM A PAINTING BY C. R. LESLIE, R.A.

of those books which belong to every age and clime, and which can be read everywhere, for ever, and by everybody, with equal delight. In "Don Quixote" we have the broadest farce, without a particle of coarseness, mingled with the keenest satire and deep love for humanity, indulgence for its errors and follies, and belief in his innate goodness. These are qualities that find favour everywhere, and call forth as hearty admiration from the American as the Spaniard. One of the most amusing characters in the work, Sancho—that happy per-

man of dreams, Don Quixote, his master—has been ably rendered by Mr. Leslie, in one of his most laughable situations—while "governor of the island of Barataria." The honours of royalty never sat so heavily on him as at table.

We cannot do better than let Cervantes himself describe the scene so well chosen and so worthily represented by the artist, an excellent engraving of whose picture we are enabled to lay before our readers.